

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 11295 151854Z  
ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 11295

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PE, EC  
SUBJECT: PERUVIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THE NORTH

REF: QUITO 8683, IR 6876 340-76, IR 6876 344-76, IR 6876 346-76,  
LIMA 11233

1. ECUADOREAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES OF 30,000 PERUVIAN TROOPS AND ONE TANK BATTALION POISED FOR A PURPORTED JANUARY ATTACK ON ECUADOR SEEM TO BE BASED MORE ON FEAR THAN HARD INTELLIGENCE. WITH AN APPROXIMATELY 50,000-MAN ARMY (GOP BELIEVED TO HAVE PLANS TO DOUBLE ITS SIZE), PERU COULD NOT PUT 30,000 TROOPS ON THE ECUADOREAN BORDER WHEN THE MAJOR SOURCE OF SOMEWHAT HEIGHTENED TENSIONS IS FOCUSED ON THE CHILEAN FRONTIER. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 17,000 ARMY TROOPS IN THE NORTHERN AND NORTH-EASTERN MILITARY REGIONS INCLUDING IQUITOS. THE NUMBER NEAR THE BORDER WOULD HAVE TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS, AND UNDER 10,000.

2. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RECENT PERUVIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS INTO THE NORTHERN AREA BUT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION OF A MAJOR DEPLOYMENT THERE. THE 69TH AIRBORNE INFANTRY BATTALION IS BEING MOVED FROM LIMA TO IQUITOS, STILL RATHER DISTANT FROM THE ECUADOREAN BORDER (SEE IR 6876 346-76). WE HAVE HEARD THAT A T-55 TANK BATTALION MOVED NORTH IN RECENT MONTHS.

3. THE GOP HAS INTRODUCED A "THEATER OF OPERATIONS" CONCEPT IN THE NORTHERN AND NORTH-EASTERN REGIONS AND THE MILITARY SERVICES ARE WORKING UP WAR CONTINGENCY PLANS AT LEAST SOME OF  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LIMA 11295 151854Z

WHICH INCLUDE A FIRST STRIKE AGAINST ECUADOR IN ORDER TO CONCENTRATE

LATER ON THE CHILEAN FRONT SHOULD WAR BREAK OUT. (SEE IR 6876 340-76 AND IR 6876 344-76 WHICH IS BEING POUCHED). THESE PLANS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN IN DEVELOPMENT FOR SOME TIME AND DO NOT RELATE TO HEIGHTENED TENSIONS PRECIPITATED BY THE CANCELLATION OF MORALES BERMUDEZ' AIRPORT STOPOVER IN QUITO. IN ANY CASE, THE ECUADOREAN AMBASSADOR IN LIMA IN A DECEMBER 13 CONVERSATION WITH THE DCM (LIMA 11233) SEEMED SOMEWHAT REASSURED THAT THE GOP DID NOT CONSIDER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AT A BREAKING POINT AND THAT PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR MORELLI WOULD SOON RETURN TO QUITO.

4. THERE IS NO STATE OF ALARM IN MILITARY CIRCLES HERE. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SOME INCREASE IN TENSIONS ON BOTH THE ECUADOREAN AND CHILEAN BORDERS, THERE IS LITTLE FEELING THAT WAR IS IMMINENT. HOWEVER, WHATEVER THE LEVEL OF DEPLOYMENT AT THE BORDER, TENSIONS AND POSSIBLY MISTAKEN PERCEPTIONS OF INTENT ON BOTH SIDES DO OF COURSE INCREASE THE DANGER OF AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT WHICH COULD BE A CATWBYST LEADING TO HOSTILITIES. DEAN

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